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THE SEASONAL FARM LABOR SITUATION IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY IN 1959 AND 1960

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GIANNINI FOUNDATION OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
Giannini Foundation Research Report No. 247
August 1961

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers Santa Clara County only, but is part of a larger study conducted by the Giannini Foundation to assemble factual information helpful to farmers and government in a consideration of measures to help meet the seasonal farm labor problem in California. Growers and agencies were interviewed. Information and data presented here were checked with original sources or were substantiated by several interviews. Opinions are reported only when they are believed to have some basis of truth or to show a prevalent attitude. Names of people interviewed are withheld since some farmers and agency representatives said they did not wish to be quoted or it was against the rules of their agency.

SUMMARY

1. Santa Clara County agriculture needs between 20,000 to 25,000 seasonal workers to meet fruit and vegetable harvesting peaks between July and September, but from November to April only 3,000 to 5,000 are needed.

2. These seasonal peak needs are being met as follows:

   a. Seasonal or temporary farm workers living in the county.
   b. Workers from other states and other counties in California.
   c. Foreign contract workers as needed to augment the above from April to November.

3. Tasks vary by crop and job. Some can be done by women, youth, and nonfarm workers. The arduous stoop labor jobs, such as thinning, weeding and some harvesting, require men accustomed to such work. An inadequate supply of domestic workers for such jobs has necessitated the use of foreign contract workers.

4. Wages and earnings in seasonal farm work are lower than in nonfarm employment. Local farm workers have been lost to expanding local nonfarm employment but seem to be replaced by additional migrants who remain here.

5. The large nonfarm labor force of 240,000 in the county, of which 3.6% or 9,800 were unemployed in August of 1960, furnished few workers for seasonal farm work. Nonfarm workers lacking in the skills and conditioning for farm tasks seldom accept or stay in farm work long enough to become a dependable source of harvest worker.

6. Housing is provided on farms for less than half of the seasonal workers required. In 1960, migratory families seemed to find enough housing off the farms so they could stay through the harvest period.

7. The foreign contract worker's program was well administered here, with safeguards against replacing available domestic workers or depressing wage levels. These workers were a dependable supplemental supply and did not need public support when not employed here.

8. Local seasonal workers were unable to obtain sufficient farm employment for their support in the winter months as shown by the fact that, in the Gilroy area alone, 93 families received general public assistance in February, 1961.

9. The main seasonal farm labor problem in Santa Clara County is that more workers are needed for harvesting the several fruit and vegetable crops from May through October than can be adequately supported by farm work during the remainder of the year.

10. Mechanization may in time reduce somewhat the harvest workers needed. Higher labor costs or worker shortages would bring some reduction in high labor crops. But peak needs can never be leveled to a point where no additional workers are needed above those for whom there is employment the year around.

11. The problem of creating additional employment for the adequate support of people for whom there is only seasonal employment in agriculture is a problem of society--not just agriculture.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY--ITS NATURE AND TRENDS

Santa Clara County is in a mild, temperate climatic zone suited to a wide range of intensive high-value crops--deciduous fruits, walnuts, berries, grapes, vegetables, cut flowers, and nursery plants. In the last ten years, over 60,000 acres of farm land have been lost to agriculture through industrial, business and residential development around San Jose, the county seat. Table 2 shows the Agricultural Commissioner's estimates of crop and pasture acreage, about 3,600 acres less in 1960 than in 1959. Population of the county has increased in the last ten years from 291,000 to 638,000 or 220 per cent. This great metropolitan development has resulted in a shift of interest from agriculture to other industries on the part of most of the people.

But despite this large metropolitan development, a large and important agriculture continues. Table 1 shows that there were 5,282 farms in 1949 and 3,344 in 1959, according to the United States Census of Agriculture. Table 2 shows the value of agricultural products at $96 million in 1959. Some of this farming continues around, and is partially surrounded by, the metropolitan sprawl in the northern part of the country. The southern part is still largely agricultural. This condition, however, results in several handicaps to commercial farming. Land values and taxes are higher than in other farming areas. Expectation of further loss of land to agriculture makes tenure uncertain and discourages capital outlay for agricultural development and improvements. Minor handicaps arise from congestion, air pollution, and regulations to abate nuisances.

Inquiry shows that the large nonfarm population, with 237,000 employed, is not a reservoir from which workers may be drawn to help meet the peak harvest labor needs of summer and fall. Temporarily unemployed nonfarm workers, of whom there were 9,800 in August of 1960, seldom accept farm work. They are said to prefer the reduced income of unemployment insurance to the earnings available at harvest work piece rates because of their lack of skill and physical conditioning. On the other hand, the many nonfarm employment opportunities deplete the local farm labor force.

Local agriculture is fortunate in that its wide range of fruit and vegetable crops, with staggered harvest periods, provides seasonal work over a longer period than in some other areas. This fact, plus a pleasant climate and relatively good earnings, attracts a large number of migratory families who do farm work. Some of these stay and replenish the local supply of seasonal farm workers.

Santa Clara County is not an area of large farms. Table 1, which presents data from the United States Census of Agriculture, shows that in 1959, of the 2,418 commercial farms, 1,007 or 41.6 per cent were in economic Classes I and II, with over $20,000 gross income. For the state as a whole, 39.8% were in these groups. Farms do not need to be large to earn a $20,000 gross income. A grower with 70 acres of canning tomatoes, a yield of 20 tons per acre, for which he received $22 a ton, would have a gross income of over $30,000. He would not be considered a large farmer. He could do most of his own cultural work but would need to hire a few men for thinning and weeding in the spring and perhaps 30 pickers for three to four weeks in September and October. Picking and loading boxes at current rates would cost him $8 a ton or $11,200 for the 1,400 tons. Net income over all production costs would not provide a very adequate family income. Likewise, a fruit grower does not need to be large to

TABLE 1

Farming in Santa Clara County as Shown by the U. S. Census of Agriculture

	1949	1954	1959
Number of farms	5,282	4,953	3,344
Land in farms (acres)	588,996	590,041	527,798
Per cent of area of 835,200 acres in farms	70.5	70.6	63.3
Average size of farm (acres)	111.5	119.1	157.8
Value of land and buildings per farm (dollars)	42,099	84,250	151,345
Average value of land with buildings per acre (dollars)	355	875	1,192
Number of farms irrigated	3,449	3,337	2,403
Total acreage irrigated (acres)	105,721	114,677	97,511
Number of farm operators residing on farm operated	4,662	4,339	2,620
Number working off farm 100 days or more in year	1,708	1,636	1,133
Number of farms operated by:			
Full owners	4,001	3,617	2,440
Part owners	590	650	473
Tenants	594	613	360
Managers	97	73	71
Number of farms by major source of income			
Fruit and nut farms	2,575	2,760	1,522
Vegetable farms	304	218	160
Field crop farms	69	18	14
General farms	125	52	35
Dairy farms	158	106	99
Poultry farms	394	335	210
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry	172	214	146
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms	1,485	1,249	1,197
Farms by economic class			
Class I, value of products sold--over $25,000	487	748	1,007 a/
Class II, value of products sold--$10,000-$24,999	580	954	435 b/
Class III, value of products sold--$5,000-$9,999	754	804	439
Class IV, value of products sold--$2,500-$4,999	868	670	352
Class V, value of products sold--$1,200-$2,499	907	558	} 185 c/
Class VI, value of products sold--$250-$1,199	292	141	
Total commercial farms	3,888	3,875	2,418
Part-time farms, products sold--$250-$1,199 plus off-farm work	707	550	673 d/
Residential farms, products sold--less than $250	679	520	291 e/
Abnormal farms, institutions, etc.	8	7	1
Total other farms	1,394	1,077	965

a/ Farms with sales of $20,000 or more.

b/ Farms with sales of $10,000-$19,999.

c/ Farms with sales of $50-$2,499.

d/ Part-time (operator under 65 years of age and working off farm 100 or more days or with income from other sources greater than farm products sold, and sales of farm products $50-$2,499).

e/ Part retirement (operator 65 years old or over and sales $50-$2,499).

TABLE 2

Major Crops and Livestock Enterprises in Santa Clara County

	1959		1960	
	Acres or head	Value	Acres or head	Value
		thousand dollars		thousand dollars
Apricots	11,920	8,176	11,545	8,897
Cherries	3,026	1,775	3,073	2,977
Grapes	3,773	745	3,752	1,024
Pears, all varieties	6,436	4,543	6,158	6,148
Prunes	32,434	21,798	31,755	20,320
Walnuts	8,377	2,727	8,312	3,720
Total fruits, including others	66,456	40,200	65,183	43,398
Rasperries and other bushberries	153	434	156	440
Strawberries	1,475	7,407	1,115	5,614
Snap beans	1,495	1,211	895	921
Green lima beans	810	202	1,505	349
Broccoli	930	354	695	273
Cauliflower	865	520	680	297
Celery	390	419	240	248
Sweet Corn	480	150	330	122
Cucumbers	665	414	580	426
Garlic	1,040	939	1,130	870
Lettuce	2,095	1,326	1,920	963
Onions, dry	375	378	420	415
Peppers, all varieties	385	384	325	324
Spinach	290	69	215	58
Tomatoes	3,925	2,207	3,840	2,252
Total vegetables, including others	16,457	10,278	14,220	8,624
Alfalfa	1,525	248	1,622	232
Grain and volunteer hay	10,600	308	8,442	254
Barley	2,000	84	2,100	84
Sugar beets	2,587	788	4,100	1,230
Total field crops, pasture, range	251,443	2,665	251,040	3,034
Cut flowers		7,907		9,354
Nursery stock		2,746		3,343
Vegetable and flower seed	835	182	1,060	425
Total crops	336,416	71,819	332,774	74,233
Milk		7,952		7,625
Cattle and calves sold	53,185	9,612	40,880	3,415
Swine sold	11,500	405	11,585	280
Lambs, sheep and wool sold	2,400	48	2,200	40
Total livestock and products		18,017		11,360
Eggs		5,325		4,639
Meat chickens sold		647		992
Total eggs, poultry, rabbits, and squabs		6,034		5,691
Total livestock, poultry, and products		24,069		17,071
TOTAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS		95,890		91,304

Source: Agricultural Crop Report, Santa Clara County, 1960; David T. Rayner, Agricultural Commissioner.

have a gross income of over $20,000--40 acres at $500 an acre would yield this income. The many small farmers with fruits, berries, or vegetables to pick, need considerable hired labor at harvest time. Small or large, the ability to harvest and market perishable crops in the short harvest period is vital to the economic survival of the 1,522 fruit farmers and 160 vegetable farmers shown by the 1959 Census.

FARM LABOR NEEDS

Farming activities can be classified as either year around or seasonal. The cultural work of operating equipment, irrigating and other jobs in growing crops and the caring for livestock or poultry go on throughout the year and require a variety of skills and experience. Farmers, with small farms, do most of this themselves. On larger farms, from one to several skilled workers are employed the year around. Special jobs, however, require a large number of hand workers for a short period and create a vital need for additional or temporary workers for seasonal activities.

The need for farm workers of both main types may be shown by estimates of the number working, as compiled by the local Farm Placement Staff of the California Department of Employment. Table 3 shows the number working by type of worker during the week ending nearest the middle of each month in 1960.

Seasonal Activities - Seasonal activities are those jobs that must be done in a relatively short period for specific crops. These jobs come at about the same time each year, although climatic variations or current weather may shift an operation from a few days to a week or two earlier or later than normal. Some seasonal jobs, such as pruning orchards or vineyards, can be done any time during the winter period of November to March, so they are not critical as to timing. Others, such as planting, thinning, and weeding of vegetables, require proper timing for best results but are not as critical as harvesting. Major seasonal operations are those that require a considerable number of workers in addition to those working on the farm the year around. These require a large supplemental supply of temporary workers. These major seasonal activities are studied and reported weekly by the Farm Placement Service of the California Department of Employment. Table 4 shows the Department estimates of the number working at these major seasonal activities at mid-month for a crop cycle from November 1959 through October 1960. Figure 1 shows the total number working in all of these seasonal tasks for the two years 1959 and 1960.

Harvesting - The harvesting of fruits and vegetables is the most important seasonal activity and requires the major portion of all seasonal or temporary workers. The harvest of a fruit or vegetable is most critical as to timing. The product is at the proper maturity for fresh marketing or processing only from one to a few days. An inadequate supply of workers for picking a specific field or orchard results in deterioration of quality or loss of crop and in serious economic loss to the grower. It is seldom considered possible for a grower to obtain the ideal harvest operation in which there is no loss of quality or crop. A small loss is accepted as normal and more economical than having a crew large and skilled enough to complete the entire picking on the day of optimum maturity. Fortunately, there has been little recorded crop loss due to labor shortage or work stoppage on farms in Santa Clara County in recent years. Supplies of local and migratory temporary workers plus the small supplemental supply of foreign contract workers have been adequate to harvest the crops.

Table 4 continued.

a/ Major seasonal activities are those involving additional workers for a short period of a few weeks to several months. Workers needed for these seasonal jobs are largely in addition to the family and hired year-around workers, although some of these and members of their families may at times participate to a small extent in handwork, such as harvesting. Largely, however, regular hired and family workers perform service, supervision, and skilled machinery operations and so are not a part of the hand workers in the harvest crews.

This table is a digest taken from weekly reports on number working each week at major seasonal jobs. It cannot show by weeks how the number of workers needed for each job rises to a peak and declines. The number working at midmonth does, however, fairly well reflect the changing needs for seasonal workers. The grand total is the peak number for any week during that month. The total man weeks by crop is an addition of those working for all weeks of the year. Notice that over 25,000 were needed in July--a bit higher than usual because of the large apricot crop. But there was employment for only around 4,000 from December to March. This constitutes the main farm labor problem of Santa Clara County.

Source: California Department of Employment, California Weekly Farm Labor Report; Major Seasonal Activities, by County Report 881-A (Sacramento: weekly issues). Processed.

TABLE 3

Estimates of Farm Employment by Type of Worker
Santa Clara County, 1960

Month	Farmers and unpaid family	Regular hired	Total regular	Seasonal domestic	Foreign contract workers	Total seasonal	Total all workers
January	4,200	3,400	7,600	1,550	0	1,550	9,150
February	4,150	3,400	7,550	1,100	0	1,100	8,650
March	4,150	3,400	7,550	1,750	0	1,750	9,300
April	4,200	3,350	7,550	2,550	0	2,550	10,100
May	5,440	2,760	8,200	3,400	950	4,350	12,550
June	5,640	2,870	8,510	7,310	1,110	8,420	16,930
July	6,620	4,020	10,640	19,630	830	20,460	31,100
August	6,510	3,920	10,430	10,360	1,660	12,020	22,450
September	5,570	3,570	9,140	7,890	2,090	9,980	19,120
October	4,660	3,400	8,060	2,910	1,630	4,540	12,600
November	4,140	3,400	7,540	1,260	200	1,460	9,000
December	4,150	3,350	7,500	1,250	0	1,250	8,750

Source: California Weekly Farm Labor Report, DE 881, 1960. Figures shown are for week ended nearest the fifteenth of the month. Furnished by Research and Statistics, State of California, Department of Employment.

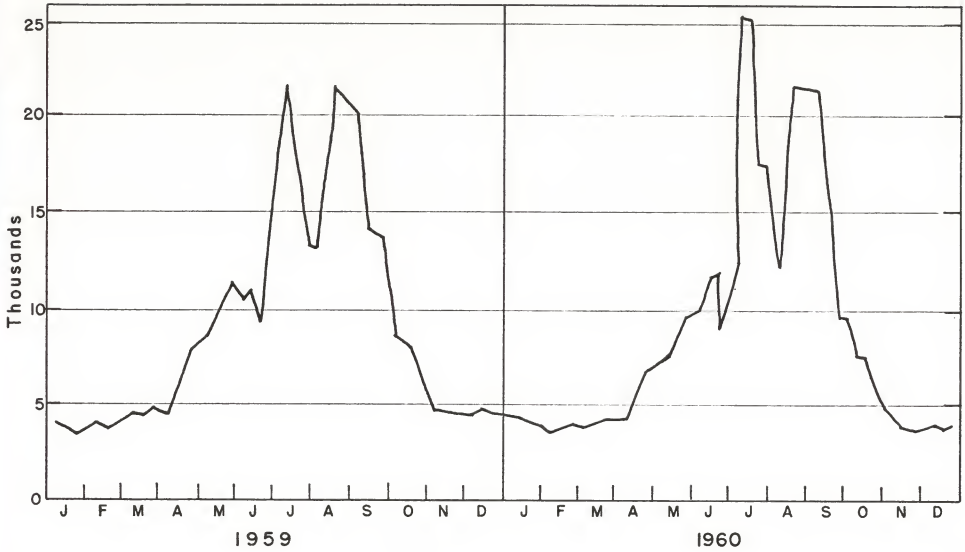
TABLE 4

Number Working at Midmonth by Major Seasonal Activities, Santa Clara County, 1959-60[8]

Crop	Activity	Acreage	1959 November	1959 December	1960 January	1960 February	1960 March	1960 April	1960 May	1960 June	1960 July	1960 August	1960 September	1960 October	Total man weeks
Apricots	Thin, harvest	11,500						850 (thin)			17,000 (harvest)				59,950
Cherries	Pick, pack	3,300								5,000					16,900
Pears	Pick	6,100										2,000	400		10,220
Prunes	Pick, dry	34,000										12,000	6,000		60,500
Walnuts		7,850												1,100	6,250
Orchard Pruning		69,300	1,600	1,700	1,800	1,200	800	400						750	34,650
Total tree fruits		69,300													188,470
Grapes	Prune, pick	4,600		200	200	150							300	800	6,400
Bush berries	Pick	150	60						100	150	250	200	100	100	4,055
Strawberries	Plant, hoe, pick	2,100	400	150	100	200	350	400	3,700	2,400	2,200	2,200	1,700	600	63,790
Total fruits and berries															262,715
Snap beans	Pick	1,000									1,000	1,500	300		10,300
Broccoli	Cut	900				100	200								990
Cucumbers		500									500	600			5,300
Garlic	Plant, harvest	1,150	150	160	50	50					300	500			4,600
Onions	Harvest	550										500	350	100	3,750
Sugar beets	Thin, hoe	3,000						150	150	50					1,700
Tomatoes		3,500										250	1,200	1,000	10,000
Miscellaneous vegetables		15,300	1,600	1,300	1,300	1,250	1,550	1,900	2,300	2,500	3,000	3,000	2,500	2,000	106,170
Total vegetables and row crops															142,810
Flowers		320	750	750	750	750	1,000	1,000	1,050	1,150	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,150	51,600
Grand total--peak need for month			5,295	4,310	4,200	3,650	4,000	6,850	9,300	11,580	25,450	21,650	21,350	9,800	457,125

(Continued on next page.)

Figure 1. Number Working By Weeks at Major Seasonal Activities, Santa Clara County



Harvesting, in addition to being generally the most critical operation in fruit and vegetable production, requires more hours per acre than all cultural operations combined. A study of labor requirements of California agriculture for 1955 showed that, for 1.4 million acres of 26 bearing fruits and berries, an average labor requirement of 145 hours per acre, of which 81 hours or 56 per cent was for harvesting. For .6 million acres of 27 vegetables, the average labor requirement was 136 hours per acre of which 83 or 61 per cent was for harvesting.

Harvesting of most fruits and vegetables is concentrated in the summer and fall. Santa Clara County is fortunate, compared with many other agricultural counties, in having a diversified pattern of fruit and vegetable crops that are partially staggered and overlapping as to harvest labor needs. Harvests do not all come at the same time, so that some of the harvest workers may work in a number of crops from April to November and an additional number from July to September. Peak harvest labor needs here, however, do come at about the same time of the year as elsewhere in Northern and Central California. This has a significant bearing on the seasonal labor supply problems of Santa Clara County for two reasons. First, local growers are in competition with those in other areas for harvest workers. Second, there is not enough seasonal work available here or elsewhere to adequately support these domestic seasonal workers during the months of November to May.

Many large processing plants for handling fruits and vegetables after they leave the farm are located in Santa Clara County. Employment in these plants is also seasonal, its peaks almost coinciding with those for harvesting on the farms. In July, 1960, employment in food processing was 18,100, as compared with 20,460 in seasonal jobs in agriculture. In August, employment in the county was 22,300 in food processing and 12,020 in seasonal farm work. By November, food processing employment was down to 10,400 and seasonal farm work down to 1,460. Both types of work draw on a similar supply of workers. Food processing pays higher wages, and qualifies some of the workers for unemployment insurance. This provides a strong impetus and occasional opportunities for farm workers to shift to nonfarm employment.

TYPES OF FARM WORKERS

The farm work to be done over a year is performed by several types of workers. These vary in proportion in different months, as shown in Table 3.

Farmers and Family Workers - Farmers with large businesses spend most of their time in management and supervision and participate little in actual labor. There are not many such large farms in Santa Clara County however. Most local farmers do much of their own year-around work such as cultivating, irrigation, spraying, etc. At harvest time, however, they participate little in actual picking, since long hours are devoted to obtaining and supervising workers and to hauling and handling the product. Family workers include a few adults working at year-around cultural jobs but are largely youth who do a variety of jobs during summer vacation and assist in handling equipment and product during the harvest.

Year-Around Hired Domestic Workers - These workers are largely engaged in cultural operations through the year. They become skilled in pruning and irrigating and in operating equipment as in planting, cultivating, and harvesting. During harvesting operations they usually operate equipment or trucks rather than participate much in the actual handwork of harvesting. In some

places, however, if not needed for other jobs, they do participate in actual picking and are often joined by family members who, being also skilled, make good earnings at piece rates. On most fruit farms, such workers are provided housing and some utilities. They are reasonably fully employed throughout most of the year or have the opportunity to work off the farm when not needed. The prevailing rate of pay is $1.25 an hour, with some receiving more, plus a bonus. Annual earnings of the worker himself are estimated to vary around $3,000, and this may be supplemented by family members. A few received monthly salaries of $200 to $300 a month with paid vacations. With the value of perquisites and other benefits, real annual income approaches that of the nonfarm worker. There is some turnover and occasional loss of a worker to nonfarm employment, but obtaining and holding an adequate supply is no serious problem.

Year-around workers for vegetable growers usually do a variety of jobs such as planting, irrigating, and cultivating. Some receive housing and utilities on the farm, but many do not. Pay usually starts at $1 or $1.10 an hour around San Jose, and 90 cents around Gilroy. About the same rate is paid to those furnished housing as to those who furnish their own housing off the farm.

Temporary Hired Domestic Workers - Table 3 shows the total estimated number of temporary or seasonal domestic workers and foreign contract workers. Local workers residing in the county made up about 40 per cent of the domestic total in July and August. Intrastate workers are residents elsewhere in the state who come to Santa Clara County for seasonal work. Interstate workers are residents of other states who migrate for a period of seasonal work. Each of these out-of-country groups were about 30 per cent of the total in July and August. This entire group of seasonal workers includes a variety of workers as to age, ethnic origin, experience, physical ability, and desire to work. The majority are probably farm workers, in that most of their employment is in farm work. The majority in all three groups are American-Mexicans.

Local Workers - Santa Clara County has a fairly high proportion of local temporary farm workers. Many American-Mexican families who were formerly migratory have settled here and become a part of the local supply of temporary farm workers. There is a considerable Mexican population in neighborhoods in and around San Jose and Gilroy. Many of these people depend for support on seasonal farm work, which is scarce in the winter months. Those who can, obtain nonfarm work and are lost to the farm labor supply, although family members may continue to work in occasional seasonal jobs suited to family groups.

Local and migratory temporary farm workers were interviewed in a previous study of seasonal workers.[1] Of all primarily farm workers interviewed, 73 per cent said they would prefer nonfarm work, 17 per cent preferred farm work, and 10 per cent had no preference. Of heads of families in labor camps and rural locations actively in farm work at the time of the interview, 27 per cent preferred farm work, 49 per cent preferred nonfarm work, and 24 per cent had no preference. In this same survey, the local workers doing only farm work averaged 144 days a year of employment. Those that did both nonfarm and farm work averaged 52 days of employment in agriculture and 114 days in nonagriculture.

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[1] Varden Fuller, John W. Mamer, and George L. Viles, Domestic and Imported Workers in the Harvest Labor Market, Santa Clara County, 1954, University of California, Giannini Foundation Mimeographed Report No. 184 (Berkeley, 1956), 52p.

Factual information on annual earnings of local temporary workers are not available. Dairy earnings and periods, for which reasonably full employment is available, indicate that incomes would be too low for adequate family support, particularly since most of these workers must provide their own housing. The Santa Clara County Welfare Department reported that quite a number of these families receive general public assistance. Data on farm worker families, as separate from nonfarm workers, were not available. In the Gilroy area, where relief recipients were presumed to be largely dependent on farm work, the following number of families received assistance in the past winter: November, 1959--none; December--15; January, 1960--61; February--97; March--96; April--86; May--8; and June through the summer--none. In the winter of 1960-61, comparable figures are as follows: October--54; November--52; December--53; and January--52. These figures show that many of the domestic workers employed in summer and fall harvesting jobs cannot obtain enough farm work for adequate support the remainder of the year.

Nonfarm workers who accept seasonal farm work when unemployed are few in number. Unemployment among local nonfarm workers was higher in 1960 than in the previous year--12,100 in July and 9,800 in August. Yet employers reported only an occasional nonfarm worker in a harvest crew. Nonfarm workers are not required to attempt to secure farm employment in order to obtain unemployment insurance. It is said that unemployment insurance available to many nonfarm workers in periods of unemployment is preferred to what can be earned at piece rates by the man who is unskilled and unconditioned to the farm task. A few are satisfactory workers but, as a group, these cannot be drawn upon for a significant supply of harvest workers.

Employers and agency people, on several occasions, spoke of the decline in respect for farm work and migratory farm workers on the part of local people in recent years. The increasing dependence on migratory workers, marginal employables and foreigners has downgraded the work to the extent that it is difficult to recruit help among nonfarm people and youth. Seasonal handwork has been branded as work for Mexicans.

Day-haul workers picked up at recruiting centers or assembly points in Oakland or downtown San Jose, usually by labor contractors, are not a substantial or dependable portion of the total seasonal labor force. They are usually men of various racial origins and are generally said to have low ability in farm work and little willingness to work. The supply available varies widely from day to day, with few returning often enough to become capable workers. Output per worker per day is low as compared with farm workers.

One instance reported in detail is believed to be fairly typical of day-haul workers from a city. Workers were recruited at the Oakland Farm Labor Office by a labor contractor and brought by bus to pick cherries for nine days in early June. The number of workers varied from 16 to 41 per day. A check of names shows 197 different workers in the total of 253 worker days reported. Days worked out of the nine by individuals were as follows: one day only, 156; two days, 30; three days, 4; and four days, 6. Average daily output was 6.8 buckets per worker. Individual outputs per day varied from 3 to 18 buckets. At the wage rate of 90 cents a bucket, the average daily pay was $6.12. In comparison, the average output of foreign contract workers was 13.3 buckets a day, with an average earning of $1.34 per hour. The growers served by the above day-haul workers were very dissatisfied with them. Extreme variations in number and output occurred from day to day. Twice as many ladders and buckets were needed in comparison with regular workers doing the same quantity of work.

Breakage of ladders, limbs, and fruit spurs was excessive. Thefts and misconduct were reported.

Local youth, other than members of farm worker families, have not been employed extensively in seasonal jobs during summer vacations. Growers reported that only a few of high school and college age were satisfactory workers and stayed on through periods of need. Daily earnings at piece rates varied from a few dollars up to $15 for the older and more diligent workers. Farmers are willing to employ school youth of adequate age, but most farmers report that those with no farm background are lacking in good work habits. They accomplish so little that they quickly become discouraged and quit. Farmers say that those under 14 years of age are generally not usable except as members of a family group in picking prunes, berries, or walnuts.

Minors over 12 can obtain work permits and be employed in agriculture under certain limitations when school is not in session. Most of these are in local and migratory family groups. Interviews with employers would indicate few work as individuals. It would appear difficult to provide any substantial proportion of a harvest labor supply from this source. School vacation begins after the peak of strawberry picking and ends before prune harvest is completed.

Nonfarm women and women who are not members of farm worker families seldom do any seasonal farm work. The Labor Code permits the employment of women in agriculture only in tasks that do not involve lifting of more than 25 pounds and in jobs on ladders not over 5 feet above ground and with loads of not over 10 pounds. This eliminates most ladder fruit picking and the handling of the usually heavy containers of fruits and vegetables. Grading in preparing for market and cutting for drying are tasks largely done by women. Women also participate in picking prunes and berries. Although women are a substantial part of the seasonal farm labor force, most of them are members of regular and seasonal farm worker families or are working in family groups at jobs suited to such groups.

Migratory Workers - Nonlocal seasonal workers are mostly American-Mexican families that come here to work in several harvest tasks but are employed mainly in prunes. Some single men also come or are brought in and housed by labor contractors, and some come as day-haul workers, mostly from Oakland. Some of these single men are experienced and able farm workers, but the majority are not. As a whole, these men are not a very large or dependable portion of the total labor force needed.

The migratory families are a fairly satisfactory and dependable source of seasonal workers at harvest tasks suited to family groups such as picking prunes and some vegetables. Earnings of $50 a day per family are frequently attained in prunes. However, this is only during the best part of the harvest and usually only for a short period of three or four weeks.

Intrastate and interstate domestic temporary workers are estimated to furnish 60 per cent of the total number of seasonal workers in the peak harvest months of July, August, and September. Most of those coming from within the state are from the San Joaquin Valley. Out-of-state workers are mostly natives of other southwestern states, with Texas probably furnishing the most. Growers who furnish housing say that around 70 per cent of their migratory families return year after year. This source of harvest workers has been reasonably dependable over the years.

Foreign Contract Workers - The foreign contract worker program appears to have been used as needed to supplement and not to replace available domestic workers in Santa Clara County in 1959 and 1960. Workers needed vary by crops from year to year. The supply of migratory domestic workers fluctuates from year to year and cannot be precisely forecast in advance. In general, the certification of need and the contracting of foreign workers have been well done according to the anticipated need. The supply of domestic workers proved to be larger than expected in 1960. These domestic workers must be given preference over foreign workers. Therefore, as the supply of domestic workers became adequate to perform a seasonal task, the foreign workers were withdrawn and transferred elsewhere or returned to Mexico. Fewer were used here in 1960 than in 1959.

Farmers interviewed preferred foreign contract workers to other temporary workers. The two main reasons given were (1) they are a more dependable supply from day to day and (2) they are better workers in quality and quantity of work than are the domestic temporary workers. The foreign workers are under contract, are housed and well fed in satisfactory grower-provided housing, and are transported daily in crews to work. For these reasons, they all tend to show up and work when physically able. Absence due to ill health is rare. The workers are given physical examinations before being accepted and admitted to the United States. They wish to maximize their earnings while in this country for the economic betterment of themselves and their families in Mexico.

Employers say that the foreign contract workers are better workers than most domestic temporary workers because they are more physically able and are more willing to follow suggestions. They are said to be in better physical condition because they are younger in average age, better fed, and keep more regular hours than most domestic workers. Their willingness to accept instruction and put out a good day's work is probably because they want to give satisfaction and maximize their earnings. Those who do not work satisfactorily can be returned to Mexico, but few are. Although some of these foreign workers are experienced and have been here before, many may be inexperienced and unaccustomed to the job given them. They are usually well instructed and supervised and soon become proficient and conditioned to the work. The percentage of all employers using foreign contract workers is very low except for strawberries and tomatoes.

Foreign workers cost employers more per hour of work than the rates paid per hour to domestic workers. The employer bears the cost of recruiting and transportation from the Mexican border to the labor camps in the county. He also pays for the return trip at the end of the contract. These costs are assessed at $32.50 per man to each employer. Under terms of the contract, the employer must furnish employment for 75 per cent of the working days for the contract period or pay wages for the excess over 25 per cent when work is not available. Employers must furnish free housing and, if they provide board, the cost to the worker may not exceed $1.75 per day, which is deducted from the pay of the worker. The employers furnish transportation from camps to work. The cost of the housing, the excess cost of board over $1.75 per day, and the cost of transportation is considerable but cannot be accurately estimated. Where one employer houses, boards, and transports workers for another, a payment of 75 cents a day per worker was usual in 1960. Health insurance is carried and paid for by the workers. The growers' additional costs over the wage paid vary by employers with length of employment and housing furnished. Some growers with only a few workers furnish housing, and the workers provide their own food

and so are not charged the $1.75 per day for board. A common estimate of the additional cost per hour of work is 15 cents. Procurement and association costs come to around 7 or 8 cents an hour. Housing and the excess cost of board and daily transportation to work come to from 8-10 cents an hour. Workmen's compensation of 3-4 cents an hour is the same as for domestic workers. There is no Social Security tax on foreign workers.

RECRUITMENT

Seasonal farm workers are obtained by growers in several ways. Some growers with housing for migratory families need do nothing but select those they want and turn the others away. Such growers report that up to 80% of these families return year after year and some families are notified by mail when the work will be available. Other growers report that they obtain additional workers by word of mouth passed on through workers themselves. If more workers are needed, the grower will then usually contact the nearest Farm Labor Office and request the number wanted.

Farm Labor Offices - The State Department of Employment operates special Farm Labor Offices the year around in San Jose and Gilroy and additional seasonal offices at Morgan Hill and Sunnyvale. The main function of these offices is to refer workers seeking farm employment to farmers needing help. This is largely done by receiving orders for workers from farmers and referring the available qualified applicants for work to the farmers needing help. During 1960, the San Jose Office was contacted by 1,800 growers, which resulted in 30,000 worker referrals, the majority of whom were local people. Although some outside contacts are made by farm placement personnel, their worker referrals are largely limited to those who apply at the office or assemble there to be picked up and taken to work by growers or labor contractors who furnish transportation. The farm placement organization does not arrange employment agreements or furnish transportation for workers. Getting to the job to which they are referred is a problem to some seasonal workers.

Farm Placement Service performs services in addition to local placement. It gives publicity to needs for additional workers in advance by a statewide system of observation and reporting. It directs workers to other counties and areas where they are needed when local work is not available. It anticipates worker needs and supplies and certifies the need for foreign contract workers to supplement the domestic supply. It makes surveys of local prevailing wage rates for use in setting the contract wage in this program.

The extent to which Santa Clara farmers obtain their seasonal workers directly or through the Farm Placement Service or through labor contractors is not known.

Labor Contractors - Farm labor contractors are in the business of recruiting, delivering, and usually supervising and paying crews of seasonal hand workers. Sometimes they provide housing in labor camps, and usually they provide transportation to the job from camps or assembly points in town. Under the California Labor Code, they must be licensed. To receive and to renew such a license, they must meet certain qualifications specified in the Code. The fee for a license is $25, and a surety bond of $1,000 is required.

Labor contractors are not a major source of seasonal workers in Santa Clara County. During the peak season of labor need, about ten were believed to be operating. Some were local, some were from other counties, and a few brought day-haul workers from Oakland, In no activity was the number of workers

provided by labor contractors over 25 per cent of the total requirements. Perhaps 1,800 were so provided in snap beans, garlic, tomatoes, pears, onions, grapes, and miscellaneous vegetables. These were not all furnished at the same time and probably made up not over 6 per cent of the total man weeks of seasonal workers.

Three labor contractors maintained labor camps for single men in the county. These camps are subject to the same laws and regulations as housing furnished by individual growers. Workers for labor contractors, however, do not receive the same protection in matters of board and housing and rates of pay as the foreign contract workers. In at least one case, workers employed by a contractor were paid considerably less than the prevailing wage paid pickers by growers. On the other hand, one case was reported in which a labor contractor refused to take a job which would have necessitated paying workers less than the prevailing rate.

Progressive Growers Association - Farmers using foreign contract workers formed the Progressive Growers Association in August, 1944 shortly after this program began. This is a nonprofit cooperative and currently has 760 members, not all of whom use foreign workers each year. The membership fee is $5, and members are usually dropped when they use no imported workers for two successive years. The area served is Santa Clara and San Mateo counties and parts of Santa Cruz, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties, plus an occasional service in San Benito County. This association arranges for the recruiting and provides transportation from and to the Mexican border. It handles contracting and provides workers, on the basis of need and at the wage to be paid, to employers who are certified as qualified by the Department of Employment. The maximum number of workers on hand was 3,434 in August, 1958; 3,926 in September, 1959; and 2,609 in September, 1960. The minimum was zero in late January to April, 1960.

This association maintains a main office in Santa Clara County, with adequate facilities for handling and dispatching workers as well as for keeping the necessary records, making the many necessary reports, and allocating costs to members on the basis of workers used. Four men and four women are on the regular year-around staff. Few or no services can be charged to growers in the winter months when workers are not provided. In 1960, growers were assessed $32.50 per worker for recruiting and transportation, $12.50 per worker received by transfer, and $1 per worker per week. If these charges exceed association costs, the excess is returned to growers in proportion to the amount paid.

The foreign contract worker program provides a supplemental supply of seasonal workers in a satisfactory and economical manner. Benefits to the workers themselves and to their country in the form of training, experience, and money saved are substantial. The support of these workers during that part of the year when they are not needed in the United States is no burden to domestic farmers or taxpayers.

WAGE RATES

Santa Clara County has historically been a relatively high farm wage area. Hourly wage rates or earnings at piece-rate jobs are generally as high or higher than in many California counties and considerably higher than in some of the southwestern states from which migratory worker families come. These relatively good potential earnings plus the pleasant weather at harvest time, bring almost enough workers to do all of the harvest work.

For the week ending August 6, 1960 the hourly rates were as follows:[1/]

Santa Clara:	fruit--$1.00 to $1.25;	vegetables--$0.90 to $1.00
Monterey:	vegetable work--$0.85; to $0.90	
Sutter:	fruit--$1.10 to $1.25	
Fresno:	fruit--$1.00 to $1.25	vegetables--$0.90 to $1.00
Los Angeles:	fruit--$1.00;	vegetables--$0.90 to $1.00
Imperial:	vegetables--$0.85	

The U. S. Department of Agriculture monthly report, FARM LABOR, of July 11, 1960 shows rates per hour without board or housing in the following states as of July 1: California--$1.22; Washington--$1.26; Colorado--$1.10; Arizona--$1.01; New Mexico--$0.84; Texas--$0.78; Iowa--$1.15; and New York--$1.13.

Farm wage rates are determined by long-range factors in the labor market, including the balance between supply and demand, the productivity of labor, and the relative bargaining ability of workers and employers. Farmers pay what they must to obtain their workers. Ability to pay more or less than prevailing rates for seasonal work is no determinant of wage rates. Wage rates that could be paid and still permit a grower a fair return vary with crops and among growers of any crop and from year to year. Growers who could afford to pay more than the prevailing wage or piece rate rarely do so. That would pirate labor from others and could so disrupt the harvest that crops could be lost and workers' total earnings reduced. Santa Clara Growers, particularly of vegetables, are in competition as to selling price with growers in other areas, many of whom pay lower wage rates and have lower costs for irrigation water, land rents and taxes, and transportation costs to national markets.

Local fruit growers, with more limited competition, have traditionally paid higher wages than in vegetables. Wages paid in the San Jose area are usually above those in the Gilroy area. Table 5 shows local wages and piece rates and some examples of local nonfarm hourly rates for laborers.

Piece Rate - The method of payment for most harvesting jobs is largely a rate for a unit of production. The wide variation in the ability and industry of domestic workers available makes this "piece-rate" system necessary to compensate workers according to their productivity. Some of the workers available would not be employed at a uniform hourly rate because their output would be too low. Able and skilled workers at hourly rates would have no incentive to work hard and accomplish much above the crew average or to improve their earnings. Setting a fair piece rate for the particular conditions in the field or orchard is important to all concerned. Growers prefer to pay the prevailing rate for the activity in the community in order to obtain a fair share of the workers available, rather than encourage workers to shop around for higher pay. Growers with lower yields or difficult field conditions which result in lower picker earnings usually increase the piece rate in order to hold workers and complete the harvest. Some growers pay a bonus to workers who stay through the entire harvest.

1/ California Department of Employment, California Weekly Farm Labor Report; Major Seasonal Activities, by County, Report 881-A, No. 767 (Sacramento: August 6, 1960). Processed.

TABLE 5

Wage and Piece-Work Rates, Santa Clara County, 1959-60

	1959	1960
	dollars	
San Jose area--farm work		
Hourly wage--year around, orchards		
With housing furnished (a few higher)	1.25	1.25
Without housing	1.25	1.25
Hourly wage--year around, vegetables		
With housing furnished	1.00	1.00
Without housing	1.00	1.00
Hourly wage--seasonal workers, no housing		
Orchards	1.25	1.25
Vegetables	1.00-1.25	1.00-1.25
Piece rates for harvesting jobs		
Apricots, per 16-quart bucket	0.18-0.20	0.17
Cherries, per 20- and 22-pound bucket	0.90	1.00
Pears, per 16-quart bucket	0.10	
Prunes, per fresh ton	11.00	11.00
Walnuts, per 40-pound box	0.22-0.25	0.22-0.25
Wine grapes, per ton	7.00	8.00
Strawberries, per tray	0.50-0.85	0.50-0.85
Snap beans, per pound	0.02	0.02
Tomatoes, per box	0.15-0.20	0.15-0.20
Gilroy area--farm work		
Hourly wage--year around, orchards		
With housing	1.00-1.25	1.25
Without housing	1.25	1.25
Hourly wage--year around, vegetables		
With housing	0.85-0.90	0.90
Without housing	0.85-0.90	0.90
Hourly wage--seasonal workers, no housing		
Orchards	1.00-1.15	1.00-1.15
Vegetables	0.90	0.90
Piece rates for harvesting jobs		
Apricots, per 16-quart pail	0.16-0.18	0.16-0.18
Prunes, per fresh ton	10.00	10.00
Walnuts, per box	0.25-0.30	0.25-0.30
Wine grapes, per ton	8.00	8.00
Strawberries, per tray	0.50-0.85	0.50-0.85
Cucumbers, per 5-gallon bucket	0.25	0.25
Garlic, per basket	0.30	0.30
Peas, per pound, first pick	0.02-0.025	0.025
Tomatoes, per box	0.11-0.19	0.13-0.19
Nonfarm common labor--no housing		
Cannery--labor per hour, day shift	1.75	1.94
Industrial work--unskilled	1.75	1.75
Construction laborers	2.68	2.86

HOUSING

The availability of an economical and adequate place to live for farm worker families is an important influence on the adequacy of supply of workers to farmers. Detailed information on the total quantity of housing furnished by farmers is not available, since a rather complete and detailed survey would have been required to obtain this information. Regular year-around workers in the majority of cases are furnished housing by employers, but some are not. It is estimated that housing is provided on farms for about half of the migratory seasonal worker families that come to pick prunes. The percentage is much smaller for other fruits and much smaller for workers in vegetables. However, there is some work in other fruits and a little in vegetables by families housed by prune growers. Some families arrive early for prunes and stay on awhile after harvest. Prune growers and one vegetable grower with housing stated that in 1960 they turned away several migratory families looking for housing and had no trouble obtaining an adequate supply of domestic seasonal workers.

The impression was derived from several sources that a majority of local and migratory seasonal workers with families have to provide their own housing. Employers near San Jose or Gilroy have less trouble obtaining workers than those farther away. Many of these seasonal workers are said to live or stay in neighborhoods in or near the above towns where American-Mexican families are numerous. Some of the out-of-state migratory families stay with relatives and friends who live there.

Housing for single men workers presents a lesser problem. Most of them provide their own; a few are housed in three labor camps operated locally by labor contractors; and some are housed in labor camps provided by employers for foreign contract workers. Housing and board for the foreign contract workers are well supervised or inspected to enforce the terms of the contract. There are about 40 labor camps with mess halls operated in the county for foreign contract workers.

Housing and sanitary facilities furnished to farm workers by employers are subject to minimum standards provided by the laws of the state. Such facilities are subject to inspection by an inspector with the State Department of Industrial Relations. The annual costs of improvements, maintenance, and operation were so high that some growers preferred to destroy their facilities and no longer provide housing on their farms. One large firm furnishes 12 dwellings to regular year-around workers and 35 family housing units for migratory workers. Considerable additional improvements were made in 1960 on these units. Some bathrooms were provided at a cost of as much as $1,000 per unit. The manager of this firm said his county taxes alone are $100 a year per unit, and the total cost of operation is $3 per day of work obtained from these units.

TASKS AND SUPPLY PROBLEMS BY CROPS AND TYPES OF FARMS

Fruit growing is the major type of agriculture in Santa Clara County. Tree fruits and grapes account for about 55 per cent of the total value of crops and around 41 per cent of the total value of crop and livestock products. Harvesting of fruits creates the greatest need for seasonal workers. This starts with cherries in May and extends through apricots, pears, and prunes, ending with walnuts and grapes in October. Thinning of apricots

requires a peak of 500 workers in April and May. Pruning of orchards and vineyards employs a considerable number of workers from late fall to early spring--perhaps 2,000 at the peak. Pruning is done largely by local domestic workers and provides off-season employment, so it is not affected by supply problems.

Prunes - Prunes are harvested by shaking ripe fruit to the ground, picking it up by hand, and placing it in boxes for hauling to dehydrators. With uneven ripening of fruit in this region, it is usual to pick over each orchard two to four times from early August to mid-September. At the peak in 1959, about 10,500 workers were estimated to be working. In 1960, with a more abundant supply of domestic workers, about 12,000 were working, and the job was more nearly completed by early September. This work is done largely by migratory and local seasonal worker families. No foreign contract workers were used in 1959 or 1960.

Picking prunes is the main attraction to migratory families from outside the county, since it enables children to work with their parents and contribute materially to the family earnings. At the piece rates of $10 to $12 per ton, usual earnings of large families are reported to be $50 a day, with some earnings as high as $2,000 for the entire harvest period.

Mechanization by use of mechanical shaking and catching frames or pick-up machines has not yet been adopted here largely because several picks have been considered necessary. Trials, however, have shown it is not impossible. Growers report no inducement for mechanization yet by such factors as shortage of workers or cost of the job. It is estimated that housing or camp facilities are furnished on prune farms for about half the families working in the prune harvest. Growers who furnished housing reported the least trouble in obtaining and holding an adequate number of workers. The main problem occurs after schools open when minors under sixteen are not allowed to work during school hours. Many migratory families leave then, perhaps because of lower total family earnings. Some migratory families that come mainly for prunes arrive early and do some work in other crops. Mechanization of the prune harvest would reduce this immigration and eliminate a period of good earnings for these families.

Apricots - The harvesting of apricots and some cutting for drying required a peak of 12,000 workers in July, 1959 and 17,000 in 1960. Picking involves the use of ladders and pails and so is limited to male workers of adequate size and strength. Although largely performed by local and migratory seasonal workers, the nature of the work has necessitated some supplementing with foreign contract workers--150 in both years. At usual piece rates of from 17-20 cents per 16-quart bucket, picker earnings varied from a low of $4 earned by teenagers in a short day to as much as $25 for skilled, mature workers in ten hours. Average earnings at 18 cents a bucket were just under $2 an hour for one crew of foreign contract workers. A common problem of the apricot growers interviewed was that of obtaining an adequate supply of competent workers from day to day to keep up with picking requirements. A considerable number of youths and nonfarm workers are used in cutting apricots for drying and in other dry yard work.

Cherries - Picking cherries involves long ladders and so cannot be done by women and children. Yields and picking conditions vary. In 1959, about 2,500 workers were needed in late May and early June. Approximately 5,000 were required for the same period in 1960. Harvest starts before school

vacations, but few students come later to pick cherries. Piece rates at $.80 to $1 per pail or 4-5 cents per pound resulted in earnings of $18 in a full day by competent, mature workers. Range in daily earnings among domestic local and migratory seasonal workers varied widely, according to competence and hours worked, from $6 for minors in a short day to over $20 for good workers in a full day. Skill is required to make good wages and not damage fruit. Difficulties were reported in obtaining a dependable supply of competent workers. Around 190 foreign contract workers were used in 1960, less than 4 per cent of the total number of people picking cherries. The remainder were domestic local and migratory seasonal farm workers, plus a few nonfarm workers and students.

Pears - Picking pears involves ladder work and handling of buckets with considerable weight of fruit and is largely done by men. Piece rates at 10-12 cents per 16-quart bucket enabled competent workers to earn as much as $1.65 an hour. Of the 2,000 working in early August, 1960, 27 per cent or 550 were foreign contract workers. One large pear grower in 1959 used in his two orchards 8 local and 30 migratory domestic workers plus 90 foreign contract workers, all paid $1.25 per hour. In 1960, he endeavored to get along without foreign contract workers. In one orchard, a labor contractor furnished 70 domestic workers and was paid $16.50 per ton. Pickers received from the contractor 12 cents per 16-quart bucket plus a 1-cent bonus if they stayed through the season. A continuous change of pickers made inexperienced pickers a big problem. For his other orchard, he recruited 46 domestic workers at El Centro and transported them to San Jose. Of these, only 31 actually worked at all, and only 16 worked the entire period of the job. Transportation and other costs for these workers came to over 30 cents per hour actually worked. They were paid $1.25 per hour in addition to the transportation and housing furnished. Some were good competent workers, but the majority were below local domestics in output, and the locals were below the foreign contract workers of the previous year.

Walnuts - Walnut harvesting is partially mechanized with power shaking and some use of machines to pick up the nuts from the ground. But, in many orchards and in occasional years of wet weather, a considerable number of hand workers are needed to pick up the nuts and put them in containers to go to the huller. In October, 1959, about 1,250 workers were involved, and 1,100 in 1960. Hand picking up of walnuts is suited to family groups. But it comes after school is in session and after most of the migratory prune workers have left. Yet, since it comes after prunes and conflicts only with grapes and tomatoes, there has been no problem in obtaining an adequate supply of workers. Piece rates paid were 20-25 cents per 40-pound box. Little data on average earnings were available, but families with children earned not quite as much on weekends as they had in prunes. No foreign contract workers were employed.

Grapes - Wine grape picking comes in the fall, the peak occurring in October. Grape picking requires considerable bending and is less attractive than other fruit picking to those not accustomed to this type of work. Pickers cut off the bunches and place them in a bucket, pan, or box, which is then emptied into a bulk tub or gondola. Picking is largely paid for at piece rates. The prevailing rates were $7 a ton in 1959 and $8 in 1960. Daily earnings at this rate vary considerably, with the yield from $6 to $15 a day. Inexperienced workers tend to become discouraged before becoming accustomed to the job, and some who report for work do not even start picking. In 1959, in one vineyard the average output of 36 domestic workers was only 3.6 tons for the period of employment or an average of .92 ton per day, which would amount to $6.44 at the $7-per-ton rate. A group of 26 foreign contract workers in the same

vineyard receiving the same piece rate averaged about $1.10 an hour in the early part of the harvest. Later, the average earnings increased to $1.25 an hour for the remainder of the harvest, with individual variations of from $.80 to $1.50 an hour. More domestics and a smaller crew of foreign contract workers were used here at $8 a ton in 1960. Later, the foreign workers were no longer considered necessary and were removed before picking was completed.

One grape grower reported paying $1.25 an hour in 1959 in one vineyard and paying a labor contractor by the ton in another, with the piece rate to pickers unknown. Considerable difficulty was encountered in this situation. In 1960, this grower paid a labor contractor $8 a ton. This contractor paid pickers 6 cents per 5-gallon pail. A pail contains approximately 26 pounds, which made the rate paid by the contractor $4.52 per ton. Pickers averaged about 100 pails per man day, with some picking as many as 200 pails. The contractor furnished housing for part of the single workers. He included day-haul and other local workers in the crew, and so was able to provide an adequate number for the harvest. In the same vineyard a separate, smaller crew of year-around worker families living on the farm were paid the entire $8 a ton. Some men picked as high as 2½ tons a day, about the same as the best in the other crew receiving the lower piece rate.

Picking the grape crop involved a peak of 1,100 workers in this county in early October, 1959, of which 200 were foreign contract workers. In 1960, a peak of 800 workers was used, including 40 contract workers or 5 per cent. These were located on two ranches in the northern part of the county and were used only for a short period.

Strawberries - This is a crop which used large quantities of labor, both in developing the crop--planting, weeding, etc.--and in picking. Some years ago sharecropper families performed all the hand labor on a small acreage in return for a share of the crop. Today, workers are employed at hourly and piece-rate wages. In 1959, about 2,000 total acres required 100 workers in January to 350 in the spring for planting, weeding, and other growing tasks. This number continued with some decline to around 200 workers by late fall. Picking began in April and needed 4,000 workers through May. About 2,500 were used through August, after which the number declined to a few hundred when picking ceased in late fall. Picking involves stooping and bending but is not an arduous job. Thus, it would seem suitable for women and minors. Peak requirements, however, come in May when school is in session. Some school youth are used in the summer. Those under fourteen are not employed unless in a family group.

Strawberry growers, as a whole, report difficulty in obtaining enough pickers and have been using a high proportion of foreign contract workers. Pay in 1959 was usually $1 an hour or a piece rate of 50-85 cents per tray, with workers averaging $1 an hour or a little more. The quantity picked per day varies widely, with yield at different times of the season and in different plantings. In 1960, 2,100 acres required 3,700 pickers in May, of which 750 or 20 per cent were foreign contract workers. Rates of pay were $1 an hour or 50-70 cents a tray, with piece-rate earnings averaging around $1 per hour. In September, there were still around 1,700 pickers at work, including 310 foreign workers. This crop has a serious problem in obtaining an adequate supply of hand workers to prevent crop loss. Earnings are low between periods of good picking and generally lower than in fruit harvests.

Bush Berries - These are a minor crop in volume but present difficulties similar to strawberries. Raspberry picking continues late in the fall after schools are in session and migratory families have left. In September and October, 1960, approximately 100 workers were employed, including 10 foreign contract workers.

Vegetable Farms - Vegetable growers usually grow several crops. Production is scattered through the county, with a considerable concentration around Gilroy. Growers sell their products in competition with other areas in nearby counties and generally pay lower wages to both year-around and seasonal workers than do fruit growers. Housing for vegetable workers is sometimes furnished. However, this is not common since vegetable farming is largely on scattered rented fields with adequate buildings not usually available. Under temporary tenure, growers do not provide permanent structures to house their help.

One large vegetable farm did have family housing for all its year-around and seasonal workers. Around 30 year-around workers were paid $.90 to $1.20 an hour, plus housing, electricity, and water. These received reasonably full employment through the year and when not needed were permitted to work off the farm. Family members were also employed at seasonal jobs. In addition, a number of other families came from out of the state and received housing and seasonal work from February or March to November. These regular and migratory families met all the direct worker needs of this large business. No outside or foreign contract workers were employed directly, although some were used in harvesting lettuce, which was done by the shipper. The manager attributes his adequate labor supply to the furnishing of housing and said that more workers applied than he was able to use.

Hourly wages to year-around employees are generally at $1 to $1.10 in the San Jose area and 90 cents around Gilroy--both with and without housing. Hourly wages for seasonal jobs are about the same. Considerable seasonal work, such as thinning, hoeing, and some picking, is paid for at these hourly rates.

Piece rates are set to provide about the same average hourly income as hourly rates but permit individual workers to earn more or less according to their ability and industry. Vegetable workers are largely American-Mexicans, and a larger percentage are local residents than workers in fruit, since seasonal jobs occur on an overlapping basis through more of the year. However, not enough work is available to support adequately all local workers through the entire year.

Some jobs which last for short periods of time provide families with children opportunities for good family earnings. Topping garlic at 30 cents a basket results in family earnings of up to $40 a day. Picking snap beans at 2 cents per pound, peas at 2½ cents per pound, and cucumbers at varying rates also offer some family earning opportunities. But most vegetable work is arduous stoop labor, calling for able adult workers, who are not always available in adequate numbers.

Tomato picking is a real problem to the canning tomato grower because domestic workers avoid tomato picking. Although acreage in Santa Clara County was only 3,500 acres in 1960, of the 1,200 pickers working in September, 990 or 82 per cent were foreign contract workers. With the constant bending and carrying of filled boxes to the driveways for loading, this job is one of the

most fatiguing of any of the harvesting operations. Pay in 1960 was equal to or above the scale per box recommended by the California Tomato Growers Association. This varies from 13 cents up, depending on the yield per acre of that particular picking. In one field observed, 20 foreign and 5 domestic workers were making a second and final picking at 17 cents a box. Yield per acre would probably be sufficient to justify a rate of 15 cents a box. Earnings per hour had not yet been computed but probably averaged over the $1 an hour required for the foreign workers. The domestic workers included two couples who were housed on a nearby farm. They had formerly worked on that farm and were now paying $40 a month for the family housing. The men carried the filled boxes out for their wives. Boxes of tomatoes weigh almost 60 pounds each and so exceed the 25-pound maximum set by law that may be lifted by women.

Another nearby grower had a picking crew of 60 foreign workers. He had, at one time, three domestic workers, but none were working the day on which the farm was visited. Orders were standing with the Farm Labor Office for more pickers and referrals had been made, but no workers had appeared for work. This grower also offered free family housing but had no takers, the migratory families having left after the prune harvest. Yields were good here, and the rate being paid in the last picking was 16 cents a box or 1 cent above the scale suggested by the Association. Earnings of the foreign workers during the previous two weeks averaged $150 for the 96 hours of picking or $1.55 per hour. The contract rate for board of $1.75 a day was deducted from the workers' earnings. A few workers made as much as $200 in the two weeks. The piece rate for loading boxes on trucks was 2 cents a box, with individual earnings running as high as $300 for the two weeks. This grower believes that tomato picking is too hard work for domestic seasonal workers, many of whom are rather old.

Evidence warrants the conclusion that tomato picking by hand for any substantial acreage cannot be done by domestic workers. There are not enough workers who will do this kind of work at this time of the year. If foreign contract workers were not available, acreage of this crop would have to be reduced materially. Machine picking of tomatoes is now in the field trial stage and is expected to be used on a commercial scale in a few years. It could greatly reduce the arduous nature of this job and the number of workers required.

Cut Flowers - Flower growers and nurseries are an important part of Santa Clara County agriculture. It is estimated by the California Department of Employment, as shown in Table 4, that flowers alone use 750 seasonal workers in the winter and 1,200 in summer and fall. This work is not arduous but does require some experience or skill. Much is done by women. Members of the operators' and year-around workers' families and some additional seasonal workers make up the work force. This business is concentrated in the heavily populated northern part of the county. The additional seasonal workers needed are usually obtained nearby. Some housing is furnished for regular workers, but many of these and all of the extra workers come in from their own homes. Pay is usually by the hour and ranges from $1 or $1.10 for casual, inexperienced workers to $2 or more for some of the best regular workers. These firms have no farm labor supply problems and no need for foreign contract workers. Market competition is keen, however, between local firms and those in other areas, in the state and out, which have lower wage and other costs.

Other Farms - Seasonal needs of field crop farms are not considered a problem. Sugar beets are usually grown as a row crop on vegetable farms. Thinning and hoeing, which come in the spring, are largely handled by local

seasonal workers in the same manner as similar jobs on vegetables. Harvesting is entirely by machines and so requires only a few additional workers. Hay and grain are minor crops requiring only an occasional worker in addition to year-around workers.

Livestock Farms - Dairy, livestock, and poultry farms account for over a fourth of the total value of agricultural products in the county, 29 per cent in 1958 and 25 per cent in 1959, as estimated by the Agricultural Com missioner and shown in Table 2. Limited inquiry disclosed no need for seasonal workers on these types of farms and no problems in obtaining an adequate number of the regular year-around workers needed.

MECHANIZATION

There are some possibilities of reducing peak seasonal labor needs through the use of new methods and machines. But machines will never completely replace the human eye and hand in selecting some fruits or vegetables of optimum maturity for the fresh market.

There is current evidence that machine picking of canning tomatoes may become possible. Varieties that ripen for a single machine pick and are durable enough to stand the handling may become available. An experimental machine has been successfully demonstrated. This operation, if it becomes commercially successful, will eliminate the difficult problem of obtaining an adequate supply of domestic workers for tomato harvesting. But several skilled seasonal workers will still be needed to man the machine and grade the tomatoes.

Prune picking can probably be mechanized or helped in various ways with labor-saving equipment such as mechanical shakers and catching frames or sheets. Such methods will help to reduce the number of hand workers required but will still require a number of mature and skilled workers. When and if it comes, the elimination of this job that brings many migrant families could reduce the supply of workers needed for other activities. It would remove the period of good family earnings upon which both local and migratory families depend for support.

Catching frames and shakers were tried here experimentally in 1960 with apricots and pears. Apricots, for processing, showed no difference between mechanical and hand-harvested fruit. Harvesting could, if necessary, be done this way with some reduction in the workers needed. Pears showed less promise because of bruising. Cherries, for processing, are reported to have been successfully harvested by mechanical shakers and catching frames in Michigan and in Oregon, but no trial here has yet been made. Trials are planned for 1961.

Walnut harvesting is already successfully mechanized in some local orchards. The use of power shakers and pickup machines can be extended to other local orchards of sufficient size to warrant ownership or contract hiring of the equipment and where the ground can be properly prepared. A few seasonal workers to operate equipment and remove foreign matter will still be required for this method of harvest. An emergency calling for hand picking in orchards, normally machine picked, can occur with heavy rains and wet soil. However, local families like this harvest and no difficulty is experienced in completing it.

More mechanized handling of all products in lift bins or tubs with fork lifts is replacing many of the lug or picking boxes or other containers formerly used. This eliminates the arduous loading of rather heavy field boxes.

Smaller, lighter picking containers, such as buckets, baskets or bags that can be carried to a bin by women, can make some jobs available to women workers. Wine grapes, which were formerly picked into boxes that had to be carried to loading points, are largely converted to bins already. Tomatoes may be shifted to shallow bins to which women could carry a bucketful of tomatoes.

Careful consideration of the effect of further mechanization leads to the conclusion that it will come gradually and will ultimately eliminate some tasks and reduce considerably the peak need for seasonal workers. But it is not expected to eliminate the need for a considerable number of extra workers during the harvest season in this county.

POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN AGRICULTURAL PATTERN

Santa Clara County farmers specialize in intensive high-value crops that enable them to operate with a chance of some profit under prevailing high taxes, land values or rents, water costs and wage rates as compared to other areas. They have arrived at their individual specialties or crop combinations over the years and would find it difficult to change. The 65,183 acres of fruits, 1,271 acres of berries and 14,220 acres of vegetables (1960) account for practically all of the seasonal labor needs. The fruits--orchards and vineyards--are permanent crops and cannot be shifted to crops with lower seasonal labor requirements except in a small way and gradually as such plantings reach the end of their productive life cycle, which is 40 years or more for the fruits grown here. Berries are several-year crops grown usually on small acreages which cannot be economically shifted to lower labor crops. Size of fruit and berry farms would be too small for commercial production of more extensive crops. Finding profitable alternative crops for some of the vegetables will be difficult. Sugar beets, for which harvest is mechanized, could replace tomatoes if they do not become mechanized, but returns are usually lower. There can be little changing of the crop pattern to reduce seasonal peak needs. Some will take place, but gradually over the years, should the supply of seasonal workers become less adequate and/or higher in cost. Such changes will reduce agricultural gross and net income over what they would otherwise be, and no doubt force some elimination and liquidation of farming units.

The magnitude of the total seasonal labor peak in Santa Clara County will decline if the loss of fields and orchards to nonagricultural uses continues. Average loss of fruit and berry acreage has been at the rate of around 2,000 acres a year over the last ten years. It was 3,590 acres in 1960. Vegetable acreage has declined at a rate of around 1,200 acres a year, 2,200 acres in 1960. But this will not reduce severity of the difference between winter and summer labor needs, nor make it easier to meet harvest peak needs with local farm workers.